IN THE CLAIMS

1. (canceled)

2. (canceled)

3. (canceled)

4. (canceled)

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9. (canceled)

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13. (canceled)

14. (canceled)

15. (currently amended) In a system providing a plurality of programs to at least one consumer, said plurality of programs having associated time parameters and channel parameters,

a method of providing program guide information to said at least one consumer comprising the steps of:

(a) forming, for a first plurality of channels, a first program guide information stream, said first program guide information stream comprising a video representation of programming offered by each of said first plurality of channels during a predetermined period, said first program guide information stream including video objects associated with respective program selection parameters;

(b) forming, for each of a second plurality of channels, a second program guide information stream, said second program guide information stream comprising a video representation of programming offered by each of said second plurality of channels during said predetermined time period, said second program guide information stream including video objects associated with respective program selection parameters, said second program guide video objects arranged in substantially the same manner as said first program guide video objects; and

(c) providing, ~~so~~to said at least one consumer, said first and second program guide information streams, said first and second program guide information streams being temporally aligned according to said predefined time period.

16. (original) The method of claim 15, wherein said first and second program guide information streams provide, to said consumer, contextually related program guide information comprising programming offered by each of said first plurality of channels and said second plurality of channels within said predetermined time period.

17. (original) The method of claim 15, further comprising the step of:

continuously repeating steps (a) through (c) for each of a plurality of predefined time periods.

18. (original) The method of claim 17, wherein said step of providing (c) comprises the steps of:

encoding each program guide information stream associated with each of said plurality of predefined time periods as a single logical stream;

combining each logical stream having a common predefined time period into a single physical stream; and

transporting, to said consumer one or more physical streams including respective combined logical streams.

19. (original) In a system providing a plurality of programs to at least one consumer, said plurality of programs having associated time parameters and channel parameters, a method of retrieving provided program guide information comprising the steps of:

selecting, in response to user interaction, a first time period of interest;

identifying a first physical channel including program guide information associated with said first time period of interest;

decoding a first logical stream within said first identified physical channel, said first logical stream comprising a first program guide information stream, said first program guide information stream comprising a video representation of programming offered by each of a first plurality of channels during a first predetermined time period including said first time period of interest, said program guide information stream including video objects associated with respective program selection parameters;

retrieving, from a memory, a graphic overlay comprising a plurality of graphic objects, each of said plurality of graphic objects having a predefined display position visually cooperative with a display position of a corresponding video object, said graphic objects being active to selectively emphasize one of said video objects; and

presenting, on a presentation device, said first program guide information stream of said identified physical channel and said graphic overlay.

20. (original) The method of claim 19, further comprising the steps of:

receiving an indicium of user interaction; and

in response to said user interaction comprising a selection of a graphic object associated with one of a second plurality of channels, performing the steps of:

decoding a second logical stream within said identified first physical channel, said second logical stream comprising a second program guide information stream, said second program guide information stream comprising a video representation of programming offered by each of a

second plurality of channels during said first predetermined time period, said second program guide information stream including video objects associated with respective program selection parameters, said video objects visually cooperating with said graphic overlay objects;

presenting, on a presentation device, said second program guide information stream of said first identified physical channel and said graphic overlay.

21. (canceled)

22. (new) The method of claim 19, wherein said step of presenting comprises:

presenting, as a video layer on the presentation device, a video stream associated with said first program guide information stream including one or more video objects, each of said video objects comprising one of a moving image and a still image;

selectively emphasizing or de-emphasizing, in response to a first user interaction, at least one of said graphical objects corresponding to said respective video objects;

selecting, in response to a second user interaction, an emphasized or de-emphasized graphical object; and

transmitting, to said information provider equipment, indicia of said selected graphical object.

23. (new) The method of claim 22, wherein:

each of said graphical objects comprises a bitmap image stored in said information consumer equipment;

each of said stored bitmap images comprises a shape parameter and a position parameter, said shape parameter defining a shape of said bitmap image, said position parameter defining the presentment position of said bitmap image within said graphics layer; and

each of said graphical objects having shape and position parameters cooperating with shape and position parameters of said corresponding video objects.

24. (new) The method of claim 23, wherein:

at least one graphic object comprises a bitmap image having shape and position parameters that are predefined.

25. (new) The method of claim 23, wherein:

at least one graphic object comprises a bitmap image having shape and position parameters that are defined by said information provider equipment and coupled to said information subscriber equipment.

26. (new) The method of claim 23, wherein:

said shape parameter comprises a rectilinear shape parameter, and said position parameter comprises and X-Y grid border parameter.

27. (new) The method of claim 23, wherein:

said shape parameter comprises a non-rectilinear shape parameter, and said position parameter comprises and X-Y grid border parameter.

28. (new) The method of claim 23, wherein:

said at least one of said graphical objects associated with said respective video objects graphic is selectively emphasized or de-emphasized by adapting at least one of a chrominance and a luminance parameter of said respective bitmap image.

29. (new) The method of claim 23, wherein:

said at least one of said graphical objects associated with said respective video objects graphic is selectively emphasized or de-emphasized by adapting at least one of a shape parameter and a position parameter of said respective bitmap image.

30. (new) The method of claim 23, further comprising:

determining, by examining said first program guide information stream, an appropriate graphic layer for presentation; and

presenting, on the presentation device, said appropriate graphic layer.